

Serial No.: 10/712,729
Reply to Office action of December 29, 2005

128518-1

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please delete the abstract as filed and replace with the new abstract, hereinbelow.
Applicant notes that the paragraph is a new, replacement paragraph and therefore no underlining is included.

A system for sintering a quartz tube is provided. The system comprises a furnace for heating the quartz tube in a controlled atmosphere, a support rod assembly for the quartz tube, and means for positioning the quartz tube and a portion of the support rod assembly within the furnace. The support rod assembly includes a cylindrical support rod and at least one retaining portion coupled to at least one end of the cylindrical support rod. A mandrel assembly for fabricating a quartz fiber optic sleeve tube, a method of making a quartz fiber optic sleeve tube using the mandrel assembly, and a quartz fiber optic sleeve tube are disclosed.